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COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting

Tuesday, April 8, 2025
6:00 PM
William J. Johnston Middle School BlackBox Theater

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT : Chair Donna Antonacci, Vice-Chair Christopher Rivers, Secretary Margo Gignac, Alexander Oliphant, Michelle Millington, Rosemary Gignac and Stefanie Tracey-Calash.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT : Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III, Assistant Superintendent Jessica L. Kuckel, Director of Pupil Services Eve Hurley, Bacon Academy (BA) Principal Amy Begué, BA Assistant Principal Melissa Cyr, BA Assistant Principal Michael Mal, William J Johnston Middle School (WJJMS) Principal Christopher Bennett, WJJMS Assistant Principal Stacey Ewings.

OTHERS PRESENT : Director of Finance and Operations Rachel Linkkila, Instructional Technology Coordinator Barbara Johnson, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent Alyssa Fratoni, Human Resources Coordinator Pauline Goetz, Director of Educational Operations Andrew Barillari, Student Board Member Abigail Stillwell, District Nutrition Coordinator Leanne Ranheim, Athletic Director Kevin Burke.

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1. Call to Order
Chair Antonacci called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

1.2 Roll Call
S.Tracey-Calash not present at time of Roll Call

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

2. RECOGNITIONS / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

S.Tracey-Calash arrived at 6:04 PM
A.Stillwell arrived at 6:06 PM

2.1. BA Girls Basketball

Coach Fennell, A.D. Burke, and Principal Begué congratulated the BA girls basketball team for becoming the first in school history to win the Division, Conference, and State Title in the same year. They held every tournament opponent to 30 points or fewer, and three seniors made history as the only BA athletes to win two state titles in different sports.

2.2. Good Citizen Award (previously Agenda Item 2.1)

Maureen McCall, representing the Daughters of the American Revolution, presented BA senior Kevin Reas with an award recognizing his commitment to education and loyalty.

2.3. Capstone Community Services Updates (previously Agenda Item 11.2)

Kelly Blain, a BA English Teacher, gave a presentation on the Senior Capstone course at BA, highlighting its evolution and significance. She explained how the course began in 2014, transitioned due to budget constraints, and was eventually restructured and reintegrated into the regular school day. Now a required, half-year course, Senior Capstone emphasizes real-world skills such as communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Students complete 20 hours of field-related shadowing, including service learning, to explore careers and give back to the community. Blain emphasized that the course is designed to equip students with the skills they'll need to succeed in the world they're stepping into, not just the one that exists today.

2.4. School Librarian Recognition (previously Agenda Item 2.2)

Barbara Johnson gave a presentation in recognition of School Library Month, highlighting the vital role that certified school librarians and library media centers play across all schools in the district. She emphasized the importance of maintaining diverse, current, and engaging resources, creating inclusive and welcoming environments, and promoting innovative technology and research practices. Johnson also acknowledged the continued efforts to support literacy, learning, and access for all students and staff. Thank you to all of our School Librarians.

3. STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS REPORT

3.1. Report from the Student Board Members

Student Board Member Stillwell reported that the music department recently traveled to Virginia, where all groups were graded with excellence. The department also participated in the All-State music event. Spring sports have begun, SAT scores will be available soon, and NGSS testing will be happening soon. Additionally, peer mentoring clubs have started at JJIS for the spring semester.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

4.1. For Public Comment, please see Bylaw on Meeting Conduct

Robert Morsch, Starr Road - spoke of technology concerns

5. *ADDITIONS / CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

5.1. *New Agenda Items

Motion by: D.Antonacci

Motion to add BA Girls Basketball as Agenda Item 2.1, Good Citizen Award to be Agenda Item 2.2 and School Librarian Recognition to 2.4

Second: M.Gignac

Roll Call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

Motion by: D.Antonacci

Motion to move Agenda Item 11.2 Capstone Community Service Update to Agenda Item 2.3

Second: M.Gignac

Roll Call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

6. *CONSENT AGENDA

6.1. *Approval of Special Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2025
Motion by: C.Rivers
Motion to approve.
Second: M.Gignac
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

7.1. Budget Finance Committee

C.Rivers briefly discussed the transfers over and under $5,000.00 and the Monthly Budget Report for March 2025.

Motion by: M.Millington
Motion to accept Budget Transfers over $5,000.00
Second: A.Oliphant
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

7.2. Curriculum Committee

D.Antonacci stated that the next Curriculum Committee meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2025.

7.3. Facilities Committee

C.Rivers stated that the Committee has been looking at the Capital Plan.

7.4. Policy Committee

D.Antonacci stated that the Committee has been hard at work trimming down the Policy Manual.

8. POLICY FIRST READ

8.1. Policy 1120 *Board of Education Meetings*

After discussion, it was decided that this policy will go back to the Policy Committee for potential consolidation with other meeting-related, public comment, correspondence policies.

8.2. Policy 4111.1 *Affirmative Action: Recruitment and Selection*

D.Antonacci went over edits to Agenda Items 8.2-8.13 and those policies will go to second read at the May 13, 2025 Regular Meeting.

8.3. Policy 4111.2 *Vacancies*

See 8.2

8.4. Policy 4111.3 *Minority Recruitment Plan*

See 8.2

8.5. Policy 4112 *Appointment and Conditions of Employment*

See 8.2

8.6. Policy 4112.5 *Employment Checks*

See 8.2

8.7. Policy 4117.1 *Retirement*

See 8.2

8.8. Policy 4117.31 *Return to Work Program*

See 8.2

8.9. Policy 4118.11 *Non-Discrimination Policy (Personnel)*

See 8.2

8.10. Policy 4118.14 *Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities*

See 8.2

8.11. Policy 4131 *Professional Growth and Development: Appendix*

See 8.2

8.12. Policy 4212.42 *Non-Certified Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers*

See 8.2

8.13. Policy 4218.3 *Duties*

See 8.2

9. POLICY FIRST AND SECOND READ

9.1. Policy 4118.011-F *Discrimination Complaint Form*

Motion by: M.Gignac

Motion to approve the removal of Policy 4118.011-F *Discrimination Complaint Form* and Policy 4118.11-R *Discrimination Complaints - Administrative Regulations (Personnel).*

Second: M.Gignac

Roll Call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

9.2. Policy 4118.11-R *Discrimination Complaints - Administrative Regulations (Personnel)*

See 9.1

10. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

10.1. FOIA

Superintendent Sullivan stated that during public comment at the BOF Budget Workshop, a citizen referenced a FOIA ruling stating that the Superintendent's cell number is not exempt. The hearing officer found the testimony credible and imposed no penalties.

Superintendent Sullivan explained that he had used his work phone as his personal phone for better service to the district, with prior approval from the BOE. He clarified the need for key personnel to reach him during emergencies while also being able to disconnect during off-hours.

He acknowledged the ruling and will comply by acquiring a personal cell phone and turning off his work phone outside of working hours.

The Superintendent also stated that the administration will return to having district-paid cell phones for work purposes.

10.2. Electronic Payments

Superintendent Sullivan acknowledged the concerns raised by some patrons regarding the absence of electronic payment options for purchasing game tickets and concessions. To address this, the recommended solution is the GoFan platform. A.D. Burke is currently exploring this option with the aim of launching it in the fall.

10.3. Childcare

Superintendent Sullivan stated that he has been invited to speak at the upcoming regional superintendent meeting and to attend an event in May to discuss the staff childcare offerings at CES through Little Peoples Play Place, Too. The program has been recognized as a model for other school districts to consider.

11. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

11.1. *Discussion and Appointment of Jack Jackter Intermediate School Principal

The Interview Panel, consisting of teachers, administrators, students, Board Members, and parents, unanimously recommends Stacy Ewings, the current Assistant Principal at WJ.

M.Millington asked about S.Ewings motivation for working with younger groups and what she is looking forward to. Ewings shared that she began in elementary education and has 18 years of experience. She values the opportunity to work with younger students because it allows her to connect to her roots and passion, which are in the elementary foundation. She enjoys being in classrooms, ensuring students are ready to learn and grow, and seeing their development.

C.Rivers inquired about Ewing's perspective on the benefits of a HOT School and vision. Ewings explained that it integrates the arts with language and math, and it's important to make this connection more understood. She emphasized that many students and parents don't fully grasp how these subjects relate, so it's vital to integrate them into the classroom and curriculum, making the connections clearer for everyone.

Motion by: M.Gignac

Motion to appoint Stacy Ewings as Principal of Jack Jackter Intermediate School beginning July 1, 2025.

Second: R.Gignac

Roll Call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

11.2. (Moved to Agenda Item 2.3)

11.3. Youth Services Survey administered to BA and WJJMS students in Fall 2024

Assistant Superintendent Kuckel stated that a concern was raised about the survey and student privacy rights. She clarified that while the survey was grant-funded, it did not originate from the Department of Education. Specific legislation was followed to ensure student privacy, and a summary of the results will be provided in the spring. Families were notified in advance, and an opt-out option was available through Youth Services and the students' respective school. The survey was anonymous, with no way to trace responses back to individual students, and it had no connection to the district's budget.

Marquis Lawson from Youth Services thanked the board and schools, noting that the survey has been conducted previously as part of the Drug-Free Community grant. The data collected drives many decisions in Youth Services. The survey employs skip logic, where if a respondent answers "no" to a question, they are not asked further questions on that topic. He also stated that any responses that could potentially identify individuals are removed from the survey, such as only a few students responding to a question.

11.4. *Discussion and Possible Action on LED Upgrades

Energy rep Chris Jordan went over the potential upgrades to lights throughout the district and the cost savings over time. He and the Facilities Committee are recommending Energy Resources bid proposal for the work.

Motion by: C.Rivers

Motion to accept Energy Resources proposal

Second: A.Oliphant
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

11.5. *Discussion on Food Services

Superintendent Sullivan raised a concern regarding the food service program. He noted that it was trending negatively before the COVID-19 pandemic. Federal funding during COVID helped build a financial cushion, but the trend is now moving negative again. He proposed outsourcing a component of the food service to benefit from the larger company's buying power, while still maintaining unionized employees. Staffing part-time and line workers has become challenging due to low wages, few hours, and difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.

Superintendent Sullivan emphasized that all current non-union cafeteria employees would be offered the same or better rates and hours; however, the responsibility of hiring would fall to the outsourcing company. C.Rivers also explained that federal funds allocated for food services cannot be used for other purposes, such as roof repairs. The process for this proposal differs from the standard RFP, and the proposal will be open for 45 days.

Motion by: M.Gignac

Motion to authorize administration to begin the RFP process for outsourcing Food Services.

Second: C.Rivers
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

11.6. *Correction to Board of Education Approved Budget for 1.) Greeter Salary & Benefits; 2.) Director of Finance and Operations Salary & Benefits

Motion by: M.Millington

Motion to make the following adjustments to all greeter salaries and benefits lines:
Salary $12,496
Benefits $1,494
Total $13,990 per greeter, $55,960 overall reduction to the budget.

Second: M.Gignac
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

Motion by: R.Gignac

Motion to make the following adjustments to Director of Finance and Operations line:
Salary $153,777
Benefits $12,302
Total $24 overall increase to the budget.

Second: C.Rivers
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

12. REPORT FROM SCHOOL LIAISONS

M.Millington left the meeting at 7:45 PM.

12.1. CES

Nothing to report.

12.2. JJIS
Nothing to report.

12.3. WJJMS
In the market for a new Principal and Assistant Principal.

12.4. BA
Nothing to report.

13. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS / INFORMATION ITEMS

13.1. Personnel Report
HR Coordinator Pauline Goetz gave a presentation on the resignations, retirements and new hires from January 2025-current.

M.Millington returned to the meeting at 7:49 PM.

13.2. Next Meeting
Special Meeting scheduled for April 10, 2025 at 7:30AM. This meeting will be cancelled if the Board of Finance does not come up with a figure at their April 9, 2025 meeting.
Special Meeting scheduled for April 21, 2025 at 5:00 PM
Regular Meeting scheduled for May 13, 2025 at 6:00 PM

13.3. Items of Correspondence
Email received from J.LaChapelle
Email received from M.Parsons

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: M.Gignac
Motion to adjourn.
Second: C.Rivers
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

Chair Antonacci adjourned the meeting at 7:51 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa Fratoni
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent